

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINGST 00875 241846Z

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00 AGRE-00 AID-05

ARAE-00 SS-15 NSC-05 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 INRE-00 PRS-01 /052 W

-----241850 031211 /43

O R 241811Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4187

INFO AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

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E.O. NA

TAGS: EAGR, JM

SUBJECT: SUGAR CANE SMUT IN JAMAICA

REF: STATE 037093

1. EMBOFF SPOKE WITH DIRECTOR OF SUGAR INDUSTRY RESEARCH INSTITUTE (SIRI) SHAW WHO HAS JUST RETURNED FROM WEEK-LONG SURVEY OF SUGAR ESTATES. SIRI HAS EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION WITHIN GOJ FOR HANDLING OF SMUT DISEASE.

2. SHAW SAID SMUT DISEASE HAS NOW SPREAD TO NINE ESTATES. THE GOJ HAS DEVELOPED A TWO-STAGE ATTACK ON PROBLEM. IN THE SHORT TERM SIRI HAS CONCENTRATED ITS EFFORTS ON DISEASE DETECTION AND REMOVAL OF INFECTED AREAS. THIS SERVES TO LIMIT DAMAGE AND SLOW DOWN RATE OF SPREAD OF DISEASE. BY USE OF THIS TECHNIQUE, SIRI ANTICIPATES THAT THE SMUT WILL AFFECT ONLY FIVE TO TEN PERCENT OF THE SUSCEPTIBLE SUGAR PLANTINGS BY END OF THIS YEAR. LESS THAN HALF OF JAMAICA'S SUGAR IS OF SUSCEPTIBLE VARIETY. DAMAGE TO INFLECTED PLANTINGS USUALLY RUNS ABOUT FIVE  
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PERCENT. THEEFORE NET EFFEC ON THIS YEAR'S CROP SHOULD BE UNDER ONE PERCENT.

3. IN THE LONGER TERM, SIRI IS CONCENTRATING ITS EFFORTS ON REPLANTING OF SUSCEPTIBLE FIELDS WITH MORE RESISTANT VARIETIES. SIRI HAS BEEN WORKING WITH A NUMBER OF ALTERNATIVE VARIETIES INCLUDING TEN SUPPLIED THROUGH

US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. SHAW SAID USDA IS ALSO PLANNING TO SET UP A GREENHOUSE TESTING OPERATION IN NEAR FUTURE. SHAW SAID HIS PROGRAM IS CONSTRAINED BY LACK OF PLANTING STOCK AND LIMITATIONS ON MANPOWER AND EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE FOR PLANTING. HOWEVER, HE SAID THAT SIRI IS NOW GROWING PLANTING STOCK AND THAT THIS WILL NO LONGER BE A PROBLEM NEXT YEAR. SHAW SAID UNDER CURRENT PROGRAM SUGAR SMUT DISEASE WILL BE REDUCED DRASTICALLY WITHIN THREE YEARS AND ELIMINATED ENTIRELY WITHIN FOUR YEARS.

4. ASKED IF HE ANTICIPATED ANY INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FROM ANY SOURCE FOR HIS PROGRAM, SHAW SAID HE WAS GRATEFUL FOR USDA HELP BUT HE IMPLIED USDA MIGHT BE LEARNING MORE FROM SIRI THAN VIC VERSA. SHAW SAID HE WOULD ALWAYS WELCOME MONEY FROM ANY SOURCE BUT THAT WHAT HE REALLY NEEDS IS A SENIOR AGRICULTURAL ENGINEER FOR AN UNRELATED PROGRAM. HE LEFT THE IMPRESSION SIRI NOT TERRIBLE ANXIOUS FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE ON SUGAR SMUT DISEASE.

5. FYI: CUBAN MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE VISITED JAMAICA FEB 15 AND RAISED SUGAR SMUT DISEASE (APPARENTLY INCONCLUSIVELY) IN MEETING WITH PRIMIN. END FYI. DORRANCE

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Concepts:** SUGAR, PLANT DISEASES  
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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Review Markings:**  
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